

nectaring in gardens in Vila Nova. *Hipparchia occidentalis minima* (De Sousa), the subspecies of the Western Azores Grayling endemic to Corvo, was abundant on part of the south western slope of the crater at 450-480m but sparse on the eastern side of the crater rim, where in 1999 I had found it to be quite common. This could be the result of "improvement" to the impoverished native grassland by grazing cattle, of which there are many around the slopes of the crater; there certainly appeared to be less fine leaved grasses, such as *Festuca jubata* (the-larval foodplant) and more of the coarser varieties.— P. J. C. RUSSELL, Oakmeadow, Wessex Avenue, East Wittering, West Sussex PO20 8NP.

Crescent Dart *Agrotis trux lunigera* Stephens (Lep.: Noctuidae): well established on Galloway coast, south west Scotland

Light trapping on the coasts of Wigtownshire and Kirkcudbrightshire between 1999 and 2003 has shown that the Crescent Dart is widely distributed and sometimes abundant. Indeed, the moth was present at the majority of rocky coastal sites where trapping was attempted during the July-August flight period:

In Wigtownshire we have found it as follows: Float Bay, O. S. grid reference NX 061472, one on 16 July 1999; Mull of Galloway, 75 on 17 July 1999; Burrow Head, NX 445343, one on 23 July 1999; Barsalloch Point, NX 346412, 7 on 24 July 1999; Monreith, NX 372393, six on 24 July 1999; Dunskey Castle, NX 005533, three on 27 July 1999, four on 21 July 2000 and Port Kale, Portpatrick, NW 991553, one on 11 July 2003.

In Kirkcudbrightshire we have found it at Torrs Heughs, Sandyhills, NX 886543, one on 30 July 1999; Meikle Ross, NX 653434, six on 3 August 2002.

According to Heath and Emmet (1979. *The Moths and Butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland* 9: 142-143) the Crescent Dart has a westerly distribution, being chiefly confined to coastal areas of southwest England, Wales and the Isle of Man. No records are shown for Scotland apart from an isolated 10km square (NJ 06) on the Moray coast, north of Forres. The Scottish Insects Record Index at the Royal Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh, contains records only from the Moray coast, dated between 1853 and 1979, and a few additional 19th century records from the south east coast.

Now that the Crescent Dart appears to be firmly established on the Galloway coast it is interesting to consider whether it has simply been overlooked in the past or whether or not it might be a case of recent northward expansion. The earliest comprehensive moth records for the area are by R. S. and J. G. M. Gordon but they make no mention of Crescent Dart (R. S. Gordon. 1913. A List of the Macro-Lepidoptera of Wigtownshire. *Transactions of the Dumfries and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society*, 1912-13, pp. 168-188; J.G.M. Gordon. 1919. The Lepidoptera of Wigtownshire, *Transactions of the Dumfries and Galloway Natural History and Antiquarian Society*, 1918-19, pp. 156-167). It would be surprising if the Gordons and their correspondents overlooked the

presence of this species because it readily comes to sugar and light, as well as being attracted to nectar sources such as the flower heads of ragwort. Unfortunately, the absence of any regular monitoring on the Wigtownshire and Kirkcudbrightshire coasts means that it is impossible to say when northward expansion occurred. It could have happened at any time during the 20th century and cannot therefore be linked to any recent climatic changes. However, if the moth is looked for further northwards, for example along the coast of Ayrshire, on Ailsa Craig, Arran and the Mull of Kintyre, it may be possible to track its range expansion, if it is happening.

With thanks to Keith Bland for details from the Scottish Insects Record Index and for comments on an earlier draft of this short note.— RICHARD AND BARBARA MEARNS, Connansknowe, Kirkton, Dumfries DG1 1SX.

***Mythimna albipuncta* D. & S. (Lep.; Noctuidae); an unusual migrant to north-west Kent, and a comment on *Cryphia algae* Fabr.**

There appear to be no more than three records of *Mythimna albipuncta* in north-west Kent in more than a century and a half. Chalmers-Hunt (1964. Butterflies and Moths of Kent), notes only three examples, for West Wickham in 1875, at Finden in 1959 and at Lee in 1969, and I can find no reference to more recent specimens. Records for the rest of the London Area (Plant, 1993. *Larger Moths of the London Area*) are similarly meagre.

On 12 August 2003, what I thought might be *M. albipuncta* was attracted to my garden m.v. light but *M. ferrago* (Fabr.) had been noted only two nights previously; Bernard Skinner kindly confirmed the identity as *albipuncta*, two more of which arrived on 13 August and another on 22 August. These occurred during a spell of considerable migratory activity, and on 11 August a male and female *Agrius convolvuli* L. were seen in my garden, one flying at dusk in my lean-to greenhouse and the other at rest on the door.

Agrotis ipsilon Hufn. and *Autographa gamma* (L.) appeared in ones or twos nightly. However, the two *Cryphia algae* Pab., noted on 28 July and 10 August were probably local residents – this being the fourth consecutive year the species has been noted in my garden in a locality far removed and isolated from the coastal and near coastal locations where *algae* has been observed.— B. K. WEST, 36 Briar Road, Dartford, Kent. DA5 2HN.

EDITORIAL COMMENT: It may be of relevance to the comments contained in the last paragraph of Brian West's note, above, that the Tree Lichen Beauty *Cryphia algae* was also noted during 2003 at Regent's Park in central London (Middlesex) by Tim Freed, with examples on 8 July (one), 20 July (one) and on 12 August (two). Mr Freed comments in his telephone message to me that the first example appeared before the main wave of immigrants to Britain this year and he wonders if the species is breeding in Regent's Park. This journal would welcome notes for